

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 02207 01 OF 02 240229Z  
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5508  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
USLO PEKING

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 2207

CORRECTED COPY FOR TEXT (PARA FIVE)

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, JA, XC  
SUBJECT: JAPAN AND THE FUTURE OF THE ASEAN AREA

SUMMARY. THE JAPANESE SEEM INCREASINGLY INTERESTED IN A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, INCLUDING MEASURES TO SUPPORT THE ECONOMIES OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES. THE TREND IS INHIBITED BY TRADITIONAL CAUTION, DESIRE TO AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN BIG POWER RIVALRIES, SENSITIVITY TO CHARGES OF ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM, SHORTAGES OF CAPITAL, AND CYNICISM ABOUT ASEAN AS AN ORGANIZATION. THE ASEAN COUNTRIES CAN ENCOURAGE THE GREATER JAPANESE ROLE THAT THEY SEEM TO WANT BY TAKING MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE  
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 02207 01 OF 02 240229Z

INVESTMENT CLIMATE. FOR ITS PART, THE UNITED STATES CAN AND SHOULD ENGAGE IN QUIET FRIENDLY PERSUASION TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN ASEAN EXPECTATIONS AND JAPANESE HESITATION.

THE DEGREE OF OUR INFLUENCE OVER THE JAPANESE WILL DEPEND ON OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE CONVINCING PROOF OF OUR INTENTION TO PLAY A CONTINUED ACTIVE ROLE IN

SOUTHEAST ASIA CONSISTENT WITH AND RELATED TO JAPANESE INTERESTS IN THE REST OF EAST ASIA. AWARE THAT A NEW US ADMINISTRATION CAN BE EXPECTED TO REASSESS ASIAN POLICY, THE GOJ HAS NOT PRESSED FOR AN EXPOSITION OF OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK. JAPANESE LEADERS ANTICIPATE, HOWEVER, THAT WE WILL BE PREPARED BEFORE LONG TO ENTER INTO DIALOGUE WITH THEM FROM WHICH WILL EMERGE A STRATEGY THEY CAN SUPPORT IN COMMON. ONCE CONVINCED THAT WE ARE WORKING AGAINST A COHERENT CONCEPT, ENCOMPASSING BOTH NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE GOJ IS LIKELY TO BE MORE CONDUCTIVE TO TAKING OF FURTHER SEA COMMITMENTS OF ITS OWN. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND. THE NOTION OF A NATURAL LINK BETWEEN JAPAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIA HAS LONG BEEN CURRENT HERE. THE ECONOMIC COMPLEMENTARITY OF JAPAN AND ASEAN IS OBVIOUS; JAPANESE ARE ALSO INTERMITTENTLY CHARMED BY NOTIONS OF PHILOSOPHICAL AND CULTURAL AFFINITY, AND SOME, LIKE MR. MIKI AT RAMBOUILLET, LIKE TO THINK OF THEMSELVES AS "ASIA'S SPOKESMAN" IN THE COUNSELS OF THE WEST.

3. FOR THIRTY YEARS, HOWEVER, JAPANESE HAVE SUPPRESSED THESE NOTIONS OF COMPLEMENTARITY AND AFFINITY AND HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE TO THE LEGACY OF SUSPICION AND ILL-FEELING CREATED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BY JAPAN'S ILL-STARRED EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A GREATER EAST ASIA CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE. FURTHER, JAPAN'S POLITICAL INTEREST IN INSURING THAT THE REGION DID NOT FALL UNDER THE CONTROL OR INFLUENCE OF HOSTILE POWERS SEEMED, UNTIL VIETNAM

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 02207 01 OF 02 240229Z

PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO MANAGE, ADEQUATELY PROTECTED BY THE US. JAPAN CONCENTRATED ON THE EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL LINKS, RIDING IN THE LATE '60S THE REGION'S "VIETNAM BOOM" AND WINNING A DOMINANT SHARE OF THE REGION'S INDUSTRIAL GOODS MARKETS. IT ALSO BECAME, IN THE 1960'S, SOUTHEAST ASIA'S MAJOR MARKET FOR RAW MATERIALS. WELL OVER HALF OF JAPAN'S ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN DIRECTED TOWARD THE REGION, INITIALLY IN THE FORM OF REPARATIONS, SUBSEQUENTLY AND INCREASINGLY AS A DEVICE TO EXPAND EXPORT MARKETS AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO SUPPLIES. TO A MUCH MORE MODEST EXTENT, JAPAN'S ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS PROBABLY WERE MOTIVATED BY JAPANESE SYMPATHY FOR US POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC GOALS IN THE REGION. UNTIL RECENTLY, HOWEVER, JAPAN DID NOT RECOGNIZE EITHER THE NEED OR THE FEASIBILITY OF A COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC/POLITICAL STRATEGY FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA. IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC AID, THEY FELT PUT UPON BY SOUTHEAST ASIAN DEMANDS WHICH BOTH SIDES TENDED TO CONSIDER TO BE WAR REPARATIONS. THEY RARELY INJECTED THEIR JUDGMENTS AS TO WHAT A COUNTRY OR

THE AREA "NEEDED," BUT RATHER ACCEDED TO EACH COUNTRY'S ORDERING OF PRIORITIES AND THEN "PAID OFF" TO THE EXTENT GOJ AID BUDGETS PERMITTED.

4. TREND TOWARD NEW RELATIONSHIP. HOWEVER, PRIME MINISTER TANAKA'S RIOT-SPOTTED VISIT TO THE REGION IN 1974, THE COMMUNIST VICTORY IN VIETNAM, ASEAN'S INSISTENCE ON BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AND IN RETROSPECT, THE LDC COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVEMENT OF THE NIEO, HAVE LED JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICY PLANNERS TO RECONSIDER JAPAN'S LONGER TERM RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA. THEY ARE PONDERING WHETHER JAPAN MUST PLAY A HIGHER-PROFILE, LARGER INDEPENDENT ROLE IN THE REGION, ONE RESPONSIVE TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN ECONOMIC DEMANDS, IF THE REGION IS TO REMAIN FRIENDLY.

"5. AMONG THOSE INFLUENTIAL ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS, IT IS NOW RESPECTABLE TO ARGUE THAT A HIGHER JAPANESE PROFILE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IS NECESSARY TO COUNTER COMMUNISM  
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PAGE 04 TOKYO 02207 01 OF 02 240229Z

AND OTHER RADICAL IDEOLOGIES, AND TO BALANCE THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREAT POWERS. SOME ARGUE, ALSO, THAT IN SEA JAPAN'S ATTRACTIONS ARE SUFFICIENT RELATIVE TO OTHER OUTSIDE POWERS TO PERMIT IT TO CHART A MORE ACTIVE COURSE. TO THE EXTENT THAT THESE NOTIONS PREVAIL, WE ANTICIPATE A SUCCESSFUL EFFORT BY THE "ESTABLISHMENT" TO CONDITION THE PUBLIC TO A MORE INTIMATE JAPAN-ASEAN RELATIONSHIP

6. SENSITIVE TO THE NOTION THAT JAPAN OUGHT TO, WITH THE OTHER "NORTHERN" NATIONS, MEET "INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES," THE GOJ NOW APPEARS TO BE TENDING TOWARD A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN AID FLOWS. IN THIS CONTEXT, SEA IS OFTEN PERCEIVED HERE AS JAPAN'S SPECIAL "SOUTHERN" CLIENT, AND FINANCE MINISTER BO IN HIS DIET POLICY SPEECH LAST MONTH SPECIFICALLY PROMISED MORE HELP TO THAT REGION.

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 02207 02 OF 02 161048Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 2207

7. IN RECENT MONTHS, WE HAVE SEEN INDICATIONS THAT JAPAN IS MORE AMENABLE TO ASEAN OVERTURES. IT HAS CONCLUDED THAT IT CANNOT TREAT ASEAN AND VIETNAM WITH FINE IMPARTIALITY; COMMON SENSE DICTATES THAT THE GOJ GIVE PRIORITY TO TIES WITH THE FORMER. JAPAN HAS AGREED TO EXPLORE, IN A "JAPAN-ASEAN FORUM," RESTRUCTURING OF AID AND TRADE RELATIONSHIPS. AN EARLY ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS FORUM WILL PROBABLY BE ARRANGEMENTS FOR JAPANESE AID TO, AND INVESTMENT IN, CERTAIN ASEAN REGIONAL PROJECTS. FOREIGN MINISTER HATOYAMA'S PROJECTED VISIT TO THE REGION LATE THIS SPRING WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL INCENTIVE TO FORWARD MOVEMENT. ALL OF THIS, IT IS THOUGHT HERE, MAY SET THE STAGE FOR PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA, PROMISES IN HAND, TO MEET WITH ASEAN CHIEFS OF STATE LATE THIS SUMMER.

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 02207 02 OF 02 161048Z

8. CONSTRAINTS TO COMMITMENT. THE PROCESS OF JAPAN'S TREND TOWARD A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH SEA HAS BEEN FAR FROM SMOOTH, HOWEVER, AND IS LIKELY TO BE MARKED BY FURTHER HESITATION. JAPAN'S TRADITIONALLY CAUTIOUS AND DEFENSIVE FOREIGN POLICY STANCE, ITS DESIRE TO STAY OUT OF BIG POWER POLITICAL RIVALRIES IN THE REGION, ITS SENSITIVITY TO ACCUSATIONS AT HOME AND ABROAD OF ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM ALL COMBINE TO INHIBIT A FIRM OR FAST COMMITMENT. IN ADDITION, THE JAPANESE ARE CYNICAL, PROBABLY IN A HEALTHY WAY, TOWARD ASEAN AS AN ORGANIZATION. THE FOREIGN OFFICE SEES FEW REGIONAL PROJECTS ON WHICH ASEAN COUNTRIES COULD REACH AGREEMENT. THERE ARE, IN ADDITION, CROSSCURRENTS AT WORK IN TOKYO WITH REGARD TO JAPAN'S ECONOMIC AID. MANY WITHIN THE GOJ -- PARTICULARLY IN THE FINANCE MINISTRY -- BELIEVE THAT TRIPLED ENERGY PRICES HAVE PLACED SHARP CONSTRAINTS ON JAPAN'S CAPITAL RESOURCES, AND THEY HAVE

MANAGED FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS TO RESTRAIN NEW AID COMMITMENTS. EVEN THOSE WHO HOLD THIS VIEW, HOWEVER, ARE SENSITIVE THAT JAPAN HAS BEEN THE OBJECT OF INCREASING CRITICISM -- E.G., AT THE LAST OECD AID DONORS REVIEW CONFERENCE. NOR HAVE RAMBOULET, SAN JUAN, AND THE CIEC BEEN WITHOUT EFFECT.

9. A BARGAINING PROCESS. THE ASEAN STATES WILL NEED TO BARGAIN PATIENTLY AND PRAGMATICALLY WITH JAPAN IF THEY WANT TO SEE THIS RELATIONSHIP GROW STRONGER. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THEY WANT GUARANTEED, STABLE JAPANESE MARKETS FOR BOTH RAW AND SEMI-PROCESSED MATERIALS. THEY WANT MUCH MORE JAPANESE INVESTMENT CAPITAL AND TECHNOLOGY. THEY WANT IMPORT PREFERENCES FOR THEIR PRODUCTS. THEY WANT SUBSTANTIAL AID TO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS. THEY DO NOT WANT JAPANESE "POLITICAL INTERFERENCE."

10. IN RETURN, WHAT WILL ASEAN OFFER JAPAN? GOOD WILL IS NOT ENOUGH. THERE MUST BE MORE EVIDENCE THAT SUBSTANTIVELY AS WELL ASSYMOBILICALLY THE AREA IS A GOING CONCERN. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 02207 02 OF 02 161048Z

ASEAN STATES MUST, WE THINK, ASSURE JAPAN OF SECURE ACCESS TO THE REGION'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND REASONABLY LIBERAL ACCESS TO ITS MARKETS. THERE OUGHT TO BE MORE EFFORT TO CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE CLIMATE FOR INVESTORS: LESS ONEROUS RESTRICTIONS ON REPATRIATION OF CAPITAL; LESS RED TAPE AND OTHER INDUCEMENTS TO CORRUPTION; AND FEWER DEMANDS THAT JAPANESE FIRMS ADHERE TO LABOR STANDARDS NOT ENFORCED VIS-A-VIS LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS. ASEAN GOVERNMENTS MIGHT ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT THEIR LARGER INTERESTS ARE NOT WELL-SERVED WHEN JAPANESE FIRMS ARE PRESSURED TO TAKE ON DUMMY LOCAL PARTNERS, TO ADVANCE INCOMPETENT LOCAL MANAGERS, OR TO FAVOR ONE ETHNIC GROUP OVER ANOTHER..

11. US ROLE. THE COMMON INTEREST OF JAPAN AND THE ASEAN COUNTRIES SUGGESTS COMPROMISES. IN THIS CONTEST, QUIET AMERICAN PERSUASION COULD HELP BRIDGE THE WIDE GAP BETWEEN ASEAN EXPECTATIONS AND JAPANESE HESITATION AT PLAYING AN EXPANDED ROLE. WE MIGHT HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO MIDWIFE A LENGTHY EFFORT TO RESOLVE, ON A REGIONAL BASIS, THE "NORTH-SOUTH" CONFRONTATION.

12. THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT OF ANY INFLUENCE WE MIGHT HAVE ON THE PROCESS WOULD BE CONVINCING PROOF THAT THE UNITED STATES INTENDS AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE AREA, AND THAT WE WILL CONSULT THE JAPANESE ABOUT IT. WE MUST ACCOMPANY THIS PROOF BY A COHERENT CREDIBLE DESCRIPTION OF JUST WHAT OUR ROLE WILL BE, AND RELATE IT TO THE ENTIRE RANGE OF JAPANESE INTERESTS, NOT ONLY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA,

BUT NORTHEAST ASIA AS WELL. THE JAPANESE ARE LONG CONDITIONED TO BELIEVE THAT US CONCERN FOR JAPANESE SECURITY IS THE PARAMOUNT ELEMENT IN OUR ASIAN POLICY. ACCORDINGLY, THEY WILL WISH TO BE CONVINCED THAT WE ARE NOT EMBARKED ON A POLICY OF PIECEMEAL ASIAN DISENGAGEMENT THAT COULD LEAVE THEM OUT ON A LIMB -- IN REGARD NOT ONLY TO JAPAN'S OWN SEA POLICY, BUT ALSO IN REGARD TO USE OF US BASES IN JAPAN AND JAPANESE DEFENSE PLANNING. JAPANESE WILL LOOK  
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PAGE 04 TOKYO 02207 02 OF 02 161048Z

FOR ASSURANCE THAT WHATEVER ACTIONS WE INITIATE, WHETHER REDUCTION OF GROUND FORCES IN KOREA, THE RENEGOTIATION OF BASE RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES, OR ACTIONS ELSEWHERE, HAVE FULLY CONSIDERED THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS FOR JAPAN, AS WELL AS THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF NEA AND SEA STRATEGIES IN GENERAL.

13. AS MATTERS NOW STAND, THE JAPANESE ARE WAITING FOR OUR LEAD. THEY HAVE NO EXPECTATIONS THAT WE WILL COME UP WITH ANY MAGIC FORMULAS. THEY ARE ALSO CONGNIZANT THAT UNTIL THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS A CHANCE TO REASSESS US POLITICAL-MILITARY STRATEGY IN ASIA AND ITS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES, THE GOJ SHOULD NOT PRESS THE PACE OF US-JAPANESE CONSULTATIONS. WE ANTICIPATE, HOWEVER, THAT BEFORE LONG THE GOJ WILL FIND AN ASIAN-POLICY DIALOGUE WITH US INDISPENSIBLE TO THE FORMULATION OF ITS OWN POLICIES. WE IN TURN WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE OPPORTUNITY TO MANAGE OUR OWN ASEAN RELATIONSHIP ON THE BASIS OF A COMMON UNDERSTANDING WITH JAPAN OF OUR STRATEGIC PURPOSES.

14. WE OUGHT NOT LIMIT OUR APPROACH TO THE JAPANESE. WE MIGHT ENCOURAGE CANBERRA, NOW REPORTEDLY MORE DISPOSED TO COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH JAPAN IN THE REGION. WE OUGHT, FURTHER, TO MAKE KNOWN TO ASEAN LEADERS OUR BELIEF THAT THEY MUST OFFER JAPAN ATTRACTIVE INCENTIVES TO JAPANESE EFFORTS. TO AVOID RAISING SUSPICION THAT WE AIM, IN EFFECT, TO SET UP A JAPANESE SURROGATE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, SUCH REPRESENTATIONS OUGHT CERTAINLY TO BE LOW-KEY AND COUPLED (AS IN THE CASE OF JAPAN) WITH SOME FIRM STATEMENTS ABOUT OUR OWN FUTURE IN THE REGION.

15. THE EMBASSY HAS BEGGED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER LARGE TRANSFERS OF CAPITAL AND TECHNOLOGY INTO SOUTHEAST ASIA, FROM WHATEVER SOURCE, AND STABLE MARKETS FOR THE REGION'S PRODUCTS, WILL IN FACT PROMOTE REIONAL INTEGRATION AND ACCELERATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. ALSO MOOT, IN OUR VIEW, IS WHETHER INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT WILL IN TURN YIELD POL-  
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PAGE 05 TOKYO 02207 02 OF 02 161048Z

ITICAL STABILITY AND BROADLY BASED PROSPERITY AND THE ASEAN  
REGION'S PERMANENT ORIENTATION TO THE MARKET ECONOMIES OF THE  
WEST. DEMONSTRABLE OR NOT, WE DO SEE A GROWING DISPOSITION IN  
THE ASEAN COUNTRIES AND IN JAPAN TO BELIEVE THESE PROPOSITIONS.  
PERHAPS IT IS BECAUSE THEY SEE NO OTHER CHOICE. THE UNITED  
STATES' EXPENSIVE EFFORT TO IMPOSE STABILITY ON THE REGION  
PRIMARILY BY MILITARY MEANS HAS FAILED, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES,  
IT SEEMS TO THE EMBASSY ONLY REASONABLE THAT WE WELCOME  
JAPANESE AND ASEAN EFFORTS, IN COOPERATION WITH US, TO  
DEVISE A CREATIVE ALTERNATIVE.  
SHOESMITH

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## Message Attributes

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